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ADDRESSES  
OF  
PRESIDENT WILSON

AT  
DETROIT, MICH.

TO THE SALESMANSHIP CONGRESS AND AT LUNCHEON  
TENDERED BY THE SALESMANSHIP CONGRESS

AND  
TOLEDO, OHIO

JULY 10, 1916



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ADDRESS TO THE SALESMANSHIP CONGRESS, DETROIT, MICH.,  
JULY 10, 1916.

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MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN :

It is with a great deal of gratification that I find myself facing so interesting and important a company as this. You will readily understand that I have not come here to make an elaborate address, but I have come here to express my interest in the objects of this great association, and to congratulate you on the opportunities which are immediately ahead of you in handling the business of this country.

These are days of incalculable change, my fellow citizens. It is impossible for anybody to predict anything that is certain, in detail, with regard to the future either of this country or of the world in the large movements of business; but one thing is perfectly clear, and that is that the United States will play a new part, and that it will be a part of unprecedented opportunity and of greatly increased responsibility.

The United States has had a very singular history in respect of its business relationships with the rest of the world. I have always believed, and I think you have always believed, that there is more business genius in the United States than anywhere else in the world; and yet America has apparently been afraid of touching too intimately the great processes of international exchange. America, of all countries in the world, has been timid; has not until recently, has not until within the last two or three years, provided itself with the fundamental instrumentalities for playing a large part in the trade of the world. America, which ought to have had the broadest vision of any nation, has raised up an extraordinary number of provincial thinkers, men who thought provincially about business, men who thought that the United States was not ready to take her competitive part in the struggle for the peaceful conquest of the world. For anybody who reflects philosophically upon the history of this country, that is the most amazing fact about it.

But the time for provincial thinkers has gone by. We must play a great part in the world whether we choose it or not. Do you know



the significance of this single fact, that within the last year or two we have, speaking in large terms, ceased to be a debtor nation and become a creditor nation? We have more of the surplus gold of the world than we ever had before, and our business hereafter is to be to lend and to help and to promote the great peaceful enterprises of the world. We have got to finance the world in some important degree, and those who finance the world must understand it and rule it with their spirits and with their minds. We can not cabin and confine ourselves any longer, and so I said that I came here to congratulate you upon the great rôle that lies ahead of you to play. This is a salesmanship congress, and hereafter salesmanship will have to be closely related in its outlook and scope to statesmanship, to international statesmanship. It will have to be touched with an intimate comprehension of the conditions of business and enterprise throughout the round globe, because America will have to place her goods by running her intelligence ahead of her goods. No amount of mere push, no amount of mere hustling, or, to speak in the western language, no amount of mere rustling, no amount of mere active enterprise, will suffice.

There have been two ways of doing business in the world outside of the lands in which the great manufactures have been made. One has been to try to force the tastes of the manufacturing country on the country in which the markets were being sought, and the other way has been to study the tastes and needs of the countries where the markets were being sought and suit your goods to those tastes and needs; and the latter method has beaten the former method. If you are going to sell carpets, for example, in India, you have got to have as good taste as the Indians in the patterns of the carpets, and that is going some. If you are going to sell things in tropical countries, they must, rather obviously, be different from those which you sell in cold and arctic countries. You cannot assume that the rest of the world is going to wear or use or manufacture what you wear and use and manufacture. Your raw materials must be the raw materials that they need, not the raw materials that you need. Your manufactured goods must be the manufactured goods which they desire, not those which other markets have desired. So your business will keep pace with your knowledge, not of yourself and of your manufacturing processes, but of them and of their commercial needs. That is statesmanship, because that is relating your international activities to the conditions which exist in other countries.

If we can once get what some gentlemen are so loath to give us, a merchant marine! The trouble with some men is that they are slow in their minds. They do not see; they do not know the need, and they will not allow you to point it out to them. If we can once get in a position to deliver our own goods, then the goods that we have to

deliver will be adjusted to the desires of those to whom we deliver them, and all the world will welcome America in the great field of commerce and manufacture.

There is a great deal of cant talked, my fellow citizens, about service. I wish the word had not been surrounded with so much sickly sentimentality, because it is a good, robust, red-blooded word, and it is the key to everything that concerns the peace and prosperity of the world. You can not force yourself upon anybody who is not obliged to take you. The only way in which you can be sure of being accepted is by being sure that you have got something to offer that is worth taking, and the only way you can be sure of that is by being sure that you wish to adapt it to the use and the service of the people to whom you are trying to sell.

I was trying to expound in another place the other day the long way and the short way to get together. The long way is to fight. I hear some gentlemen say that they want to help Mexico, and the way they propose to help her is to overwhelm her with force. That is the long way to help Mexico as well as the wrong way. After the fighting you have a nation full of justified suspicion and animated by well-founded hostility and hatred, and then will you help them? Then will you establish cordial business relationships with them? Then will you go in as neighbors and enjoy their confidence? On the contrary, you will have shut every door as if it were of steel against you. What makes Mexico suspicious of us is that she does not believe as yet that we want to serve her. She believes that we want to possess her, and she has justification for the belief in the way in which some of our fellow-citizens have tried to exploit her privileges and possessions. For my part, I will not serve the ambitions of these gentlemen, but I will try to serve all America, so far as intercourse with Mexico is concerned, by trying to serve Mexico herself. There are some things that are not debatable. Of course, we have to defend our border. That goes without saying. Of course, we must make good our own sovereignty, but we must respect the sovereignty of Mexico. I am one of those—I have sometimes suspected that there were not many of them—who believe, absolutely believe, the Virginia Bill of Rights, which was the model of the old bill of rights, which says that a people has a right to do anything they please with their own country and their own government. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that, and I am going to stand by that belief. (That is for the benefit of those gentlemen who wish to butt in.)

Now, I use that as an illustration, my fellow citizens. What do we all most desire when the present tragical confusion of the world's affairs is over? We desire permanent peace, do we not? Permanent peace can grow in only one soil. That is the soil of actual good will, and good will can not exist without mutual comprehension.

Charles Lamb, the English writer, made a very delightful remark that I have long treasured in my memory. He stuttered a little bit, and he said of some one who was not present, "I h-h-hate that m-man:" and some one said, "Why, Charles, I didn't know you knew him." "Oh," he said, "I-I-I don't: I-I-I can't h-hate a m-man I know." That is a profound human remark. You can not hate a man you know. I know some rascals whom I have tried to hate. I have tried to head them off as rascals, but I have been unable to hate them. I have liked them. And so, not to compare like with unlike, in the relationship of nations with each other, many of our antagonisms are based upon misunderstandings, and as long as you do not understand a country you can not trade with it. As long as you can not take its point of view you can not commend your goods to its purchase. As long as you go to it with a supercilious air, for example, and patronize it, as we have tried to do in some less developed countries, and tell them that this is what they ought to want whether they want it or not, you can not do business with them. You have got to approach them just as you really ought to approach all matters of human relationship.

Those people who give their money to philanthropy, for example, but can not for the life of them see from the point of view of those for whose benefit they are giving the money are not philanthropists. They endow and promote philanthropy, but you can not be a philanthropist unless you love all sorts and conditions of men. The great barrier in this world, I have sometimes thought, is not the barrier of principle, but the barrier of taste. Certain classes of society find certain other classes of society distasteful to them. They do not like the way they dress. They do not like the infrequency with which they bathe. They do not like to consort with them under the conditions under which they live, and, therefore, they stand at a distance from them, and it is impossible for them to serve them. They do not understand them and do not feel that common pulse of humanity and that common school of experience which is the only thing that binds us together and educates us in the same fashion.

This, then, my friends, is the simple message that I bring you. Lift your eyes to the horizons of business: do not look too close at the little processes with which you are concerned, but let your thoughts and your imaginations run abroad throughout the whole world, and with the inspiration of the thought that you are Americans and are meant to carry liberty and justice and the principles of humanity wherever you go, go out and sell goods that will make the world more comfortable and more happy, and convert them to the principles of America.



ADDRESS AT LUNCHEON OF SALESMANSHIP CONGRESS, DETROIT,  
MICH., JULY 10, 1916.

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MR. CHAIRMAN, JUDGE MURPHY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am glad to find myself in Detroit and face to face with the men who have played the principal part in giving it distinction throughout the country and throughout the world. Looking about among you, I see that it is true in this matter, as in others, that the only men fit for such a job are young men and men who never grow old. There is the liveliness of youth in the eyes even of those of you who have shared with me the painful parting with the hirsute appendage.

I have been interested in some things that Mr. Denby has said to me to-day. He has shamefacedly admitted that he has found himself enjoying the companionship of Democrats. Now, I have long enjoyed the friendship and companionship of Republicans, because I am by instinct a teacher and I would like to teach them something. We have been trying, some of us, for a good many years to teach in politics, as well as elsewhere, this lesson, that we are all in the same boat; we have common interests, and it is our business to understand and serve those common interests. The great difficulty that has confronted us, gentlemen, has often been that we have deliberately looked at these common interests from self-chosen angles, which made them look as if some of us were separated from others; as if some of us wanted to depress business, for example, and others of us wanted to exalt business. I dare say that you have noticed that the same necessity to make a living is imposed upon Democrats as Republicans, and I dare say you are ready to believe that Democrats are just as willing to make a good living as Republicans. Therefore, it seems to me logically to follow, though I have been quoted as having no regard for logic, that Democrats are naturally as much interested in the business prosperity of the United States as anybody else. So that if you believe that they are not as fitted to guide it as other persons, you can not be doubting their interest: you are only impugning their intelligence.

And some Democrats had noticed that the inclination to suppose that only some persons understood the business of America had a

tendency to run into the assumption that the number of persons who understood that business was very small, and that there were only certain groups and associations of gentlemen who were entitled to be trustees of that business for the rest of us. I have never subscribed, in any walk of life, to the trustee theory. I have always been inclined to believe that the business of the world was best understood by those men who were in the struggle for maintenance not only, but for success. The man who knows the strength of the tide is the man who is swimming against it, not the man who is floating with it. The man who is immersed in the beginnings of business, who is trying to get his foothold, who is trying to get other men to believe in him and lend him money and trust him to make profitable use of that money, is the man who knows what the business conditions in the United States are, and I would rather take his counsel as to what ought to be done for business than the counsel of any established captain of industry. The captain of industry is looking backward and the other man is looking forward. The conditions of business change with every generation: change with every decade; are now changing at an almost breathless pace, and the men who have made good are not feeling the tides as the other men are feeling them. The men who have got into the position of captaincy, unless they are of unusual fiber, unless they are of unusually catholic sympathy, unless they have continued to touch shoulder with the ranks, unless they have continued to keep close communion with the men they are employing and the young men they are bringing up as their assistants, do not belong to the struggle in which we should see that every unreasonable obstacle is removed and every reasonable help afforded that public policy can afford.

So I invite your thoughts, in what I sincerely believe to be an entirely nonpartisan spirit, to the democracy of business. An act was recently passed in Congress that some of the most intelligent business men of this country earnestly opposed,—men whom I knew, men whose character I trusted, men whose integrity I absolutely believed in. I refer to the Federal Reserve Act, by which we intended to take, and succeeded in taking credit out of the control of a small number of men and making it available to everybody who had real commercial assets, and the very men who opposed that act, and opposed it conscientiously, now admit that it saved the country from a ruinous panic when the stress of war came on, and that it is the salvation of every average business man who is in the midst of the tides that I have been trying to describe. What does that mean, gentlemen? It means that you can get a settled point of view and can conscientiously oppose progress if you do not need progress yourself. That is what it means. I am not impugning the intelligence even of the men who opposed these things, because the same thing happens to

every man if he is not of extraordinary make-up, if he can not see the necessity for a thing that he does not himself need. When you have abundant credit and control of credit, you, of course, do not need that the area of credit should be broadened.

The suspicion is beginning to dawn in many quarters that the average man knows the business necessities of the country just as well as the extraordinary man does. I believe in the ordinary man. If I did not believe in the ordinary man I would move out of a democracy and, if I found an endurable monarchy, I would live in it. The very conception of America is based upon the validity of the judgments of the average man, and I call you to witness that there have not been many catastrophes in American history. I call you to witness that the average judgments of the voters of the United States have been sound judgments. I call you to witness that this great impulse of the common opinion has been a lifting impulse, and not a depressing impulse. What is the object of associations like that which is gathered here to-day, this Salesmanship Congress? The moral of it is that a few men can not determine the interests of a large body of men, and that the only way to determine them and advance them is to have a representative assembly chosen by themselves get together and take common counsel regarding them. And do you not notice that in every great occupation in the United States there is beginning to be more and more of this common counsel? And have you not noticed that the more common counsel you have the higher the standards are that are insisted upon?

I attended the other day the Congress of the Advertising Men, and their motto is "Truth and fair dealing in what you represent your business to be and your goods to be." I have no doubt that in every association like this the prevailing sentiment is that only by the highest standards—I mean the highest moral standards—can you achieve the most permanent and satisfactory business results. Was that the prevalent conception before these associations were drawn together? Have you not found the moral judgment of the average man steady the whole process and clarify it? Do you not know more after every conference with your fellows than you did before? I never went into a committee of any kind upon any important public matter, or private matter so far as that is concerned, that I did not come out with an altered judgment and knowing much more about the matter than when I went in; and not only knowing much more, but knowing that the common judgment arrived at was better than I could have suggested when I went in. That is the universal experience of candid men. If it were not so, there would be no object in congresses like this. Yet whenever we attempt legislation, we find ourselves in this case: We are not in the presence of the many who can counsel wisely, but we are in the presence of the few who counsel



too narrowly, and the means by which we have been trying to break away from that is not by excluding these gentlemen who constituted the narrow circles of advice, but by associating them with hundreds of thousands of their fellow citizens.

I have had some say that I was not accessible to them, and when I inquired into it I found they meant that I did not personally invite them. They did not know how to come without being invited, and they did not care to come if they came upon the same terms with everybody else, knowing that everybody else was welcome whom I had the time to confer with.

Am I telling you things unobserved by you? Do you not know that these things are true? And do you not believe with me that the affairs of the Nation can be better conducted upon the basis of general counsel than upon the basis of special counsel? Men are colored and governed by their occupations and their surroundings and their habits. If I wanted to change the law radically, I would not consult a lawyer. If I wanted to change business methods radically, I would not consult a man who had made a conspicuous success by using the present methods that I wanted to change. Not because I would distrust these men, but because I would know that they would not change their thinking over night, that they would have to go through a long process of reacquaintance with the circumstances of the time, the new circumstances of the time, before they could be converted to my point of view. You get a good deal more light on the street than you do in the closet. You get a good deal more light by keeping your ears open among the rank and file of your fellow citizens than you do in any private conference whatever. I would rather hear what the men are talking about on the trains and in the shops and by the fireside than hear anything else, because I want guidance and I know I could get it there, and what I am constantly asking is that men should bring me that counsel, because I am not privileged to determine things independently of this counsel. I am your servant, not your ruler.

One thing that we are now trying to convert the small circles to that the big circles are already converted to is that this country needs a merchant marine and ought to get one. I have found that I had a great deal more resistance when I tried to help business than when I tried to interfere with it. I have had a great deal more resistance of counsel, of special counsel, when I tried to alter the things that are established than when I tried to do anything else. We call ourselves a liberal nation, whereas, as a matter of fact, we are one of the most conservative nations in the world. If you want to make enemies, try to change something. You know why it is. To do things to-day exactly the way you did them yesterday saves thinking. It does not cost you anything. You have acquired the habit; you

know the routine; you do not have to plan anything, and it frightens you with a hint of exertion to learn that you will have to do it a different way to-morrow. Until I became a college teacher, I used to think that the young men were radical, but college boys are the greatest conservatives I ever tackled in my life, largely because they have associated too much with their fathers. What you have to do with them is to take them up upon some visionary height and show them the map of the world as it is. Do not let them see their father's factory. Do not let them see their father's countinghouse. Let them see the great valleys teeming with laborious people. Let them see the great struggle of men in realms they never dreamed of. Let them see the great emotional power that is in the world, the great ambitions, the great hopes, the great fears. Give them some picture of mankind, and then their father's business and every other man's business will begin to fall into place. They will see that it is an item and not the whole thing; and they will sometimes see that the item is not properly related to the whole, and what they will get interested in will be to relate the item to the whole, so that it will form part of the force, and not part of the impediment.

This country, above every country in the world, gentlemen, is meant to lift; it is meant to add to the forces that improve. It is meant to add to everything that betters the world, that gives it better thinking, more honest endeavor, a closer grapple of man with man, so that we will all be pulling together like one irresistible team in a single harness. That is the reason why it seemed wise to substitute for the harsh processes of the law, which merely lays its hand on your shoulder after you have sinned and threatens you with punishment, some of the milder and more helpful processes of counsel. That is the reason the Federal Trade Commission was established,—so that men would have some place where they could take counsel as to what the law was and what the law permitted; and also take counsel as to whether the law itself was right and advice had not better be taken as to its alteration. The processes of counsel are the only processes of accommodation, not the processes of punishment. Punishment retards but it does not lift up. Punishment impedes but it does not improve. And we ought to substitute for the harsh processes of the law, wherever we can, the milder and gentler and more helpful processes of counsel.

It has been a very great grief to some of us, year after year, year after year, to see a fundamental thing like the fiscal policy of the Government with regard to duties on imports made a football of politics. Why, gentlemen, party politics ought to have nothing to do with the question of what is for the benefit of the business of the United States, and that is the reason we ought to have a tariff commission, and, I may add, are going to have a tariff commission. But, then, gentle-



men, the trouble will be upon me. The provision as it stands makes it obligatory upon me not to choose more than half the commission from any one political party. The bill does not undertake to say how many political parties there are. That just now is a delicate question. But I am forbidden to take more than two of the same variety, and yet the trouble about that is I would like to find men for that commission who were of no one of the varieties. I would like to find men who would find out the circumstances of American business, particularly as it changes and is going to change with perplexing rapidity in the years immediately ahead of us, without any regard whatever to the interest of any party whatever, so that we should be able to legislate upon the facts and upon the large economic aspects of those facts without stopping to think which party it was going to hurt and which party it was going to benefit. But almost everybody in this country wears a label of some kind, and under the law I suppose I will have to turn them around and see how they are labeled, how they are branded; and that is going to be a very great blow to my spirit and a very great test of my judgment. I hope, after the results are achieved, you will judge me leniently, because my desire would be not to have a bipartisan but an absolutely non-partisan commission of men who really applied the tests of scientific analysis of the facts and no other tests whatever to the conclusions that they arrived at.

Did you ever think how absolutely supreme and sovereign facts are? You can make laws all the year through contrary to the facts and the facts will overrun the laws. Do not let a fact catch you napping, because you will get the worst of it if you do; and the object of the tariff commission is that we should see the facts coming first, so that they could not get us. I remember a cynical politician saying to me once, when I was thanking him for having voted the way I hoped he would vote, knowing that that had not been his initial inclination, "Well, Governor, they never get me if I see them coming first." He had heard from home, and he saw them coming. Now, I have that attitude toward facts. I never let them get me if I see them first, and it is because I want to see them that I want commissions of this sort and the spirit of this sort that I have tried to describe in the commission as it is constituted.

Because, as I was saying this morning, there is a task ahead of us of most colossal difficulty. We have not been accustomed to the large world of international business and we have got to get accustomed to it right away. All provincials have got to take a back seat. All men who are afraid of competition have got to take a back seat. All men who depend upon anything except their intelligence and their efficiency have got to take a back seat. It will be interesting to see the sifting process go on. I have some men in

mind to nominate for back seats, and I will not draw all of them from the same party. It will not need an act of Congress for that purpose. And some men are going to be surprised at the keenness of the air into which they are thrust out. They are going to be thrust out, and we are either going to make conquest, peaceful conquest, of the markets of the world or we are going to be prevented forevermore of boasting of the business ability of America. I have never been afraid of trusting an American business man out in the air, but some men have. They have said, "Give us a wall to crouch behind for fear these fellows should get us," and when it has come to finding out who were crouching behind the wall, it was found that all sorts were crouching behind the wall, the capable and the incapable, and that the main object of the wall was to shelter the incapable.

As an American I am too proud to submit to anything like that. I believe that Americans can manufacture goods better than anybody else; that they can sell goods as honestly as anybody else; that they can find out the conditions and meet the conditions of foreign business better than anybody else, and I want to see them given a chance right away, and they will be whether I want them to be or not. We have been trying to get ready for it. The national banks of the United States, until the recent Currency Act, were held back by the very terms of the law under which they operated from some of the most important international transactions. To my mind that is one of the most amazing facts of our commercial history. The Congress of the United States was not willing that the national banks should have a latchkey and go away from home. They were afraid they would not know how to get back under cover, and banks from other countries had to establish branches where American bankers were doing business, to take care of some of the most important processes of international exchange. That is nothing less than amazing, but it is not necessary any longer. It never was necessary; it was only thought to be necessary by some eminently provincial statesmen. We are done with provincialism in the statesmanship of the United States, and we have got to have a view now and a horizon as wide as the world itself. And when I look around upon an alert company like this, it seems to me in my imagination they are almost straining at the leash. They are waiting to be let loose upon this great race that is now going to challenge our abilities. For my part, I shall look forward to the result with absolute and serene confidence, because the spirit of the United States is an international spirit, if we conceive it right. This is not the home of any particular race of men. This is not the home of any particular set of political traditions. This is a home the doors of which have been opened from the first to mankind, to everybody who loved liberty, to everybody whose ideal was equality of op-

portunity, to everybody whose heart was moved by the fundamental instincts and sympathies of humanity. That is America, and now it is as if the nations of the world, sampled and united here, were in their new union and new common understanding turning about to serve the world with all the honest processes of business and of enterprise. I am happy that I should be witnessing the dawn of the day when America is indeed to come into her own.

## ADDRESS AT TOLEDO, OHIO, JULY 10, 1916.

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### MY FELLOW CITIZENS:

This is an entire surprise party to me. I did not know I was going to have the pleasure of stopping long enough to address any number of you, but I am very glad indeed to give you my very cordial greetings and to express my very great interest in this interesting city.

General Sherwood said that there were many things we agreed about, there is one thing we disagree about. General Sherwood has been opposing preparedness, and I have been advocating it, and I am very sorry to have found him on the other side. Because, I think, you will bear me witness, fellow citizens, that in advocating preparedness I have not been advocating hostility. You will bear me witness that I have been a persistent friend of peace and that nothing but unmistakable necessity will drive me from that position. I think it is a matter of sincere congratulation to us that our neighbor Republic to the south shows evidences of at last believing in our friendly intentions; that while we must protect our border and see to it that our sovereignty is not impugned, we are ready to respect their sovereignty also, and to be their friends, and not their enemies.

The real uses of intelligence, my fellow citizens, are the uses of peace. Any body of men can get up a row, but only an intelligent body of men can get together and cooperate. Peace is not only a test of a nation's patience; it is also a test of whether the nation knows how to conduct its relations or not. It takes time to do intelligent things, and it does not take any time to do unintelligent things. I can lose my temper in a minute, but it takes me a long time to keep it, and I think that if you were to subject my Scotch-Irish blood to the proper kind of analysis, you would find that it was fighting blood, and that it is pretty hard for a man born that way to keep quiet and do things in the way in which his intelligence tells him he ought to do them. I know just as well as that I am standing here that I represent and am the servant of a Nation that loves peace, and that loves it upon the proper basis; loves it not because it is afraid of anybody; loves it not because it does not understand and mean to maintain its rights, but because it knows that humanity is something in which we are all linked together, and that it behooves the United

States, just as long as it is possible, to hold off from becoming involved in a strife which makes it all the more necessary that some part of the world should keep cool while all the rest of it is hot. Here in America, for the time being, are the spaces, the cool spaces, of thoughtfulness, and so long as we are allowed to do so, we will serve and not contend with the rest of our fellow men. We are the more inclined to do this because the very principles upon which our Government is based are principles of common counsel and not of contest.

So, my fellow citizens, I congratulate myself upon this opportunity, brief as it is, to give you my greetings and to convey to you my congratulations that the signs that surround us are all signs of peace.





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